

MARCUS GRAHAM'S  
TISSUES  
IN THE  
PRESENT WAR

A PROTEST BY THE  
"WORKERS' FRIEND" GROUP  
(LONDON)

THE ORDER OF THE HOUR  
BY  
RUDOLPH ROCKER

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## Marcus Graham's Tissues in the Present War

### A PROTEST BY THE "WORKERS' FRIEND" GROUP (London)

MARCUS GRAHAM, late Editor of "Man", has written a pamphlet entitled "Issues in the Present War".

That is alright, and we will defend his right to express his own opinion. But it appears that he is deeply offended with Rudolph Rocker because he is also guilty of the same offence, but does not speak from quite the same point of view as Marcus Graham himself.

We should not take any further notice of that, but seemingly Marcus Graham is very angry also because Rocker has not a good word to say on the side of the Totalitarian Empires, and even wishes for the complete overthrow of the GENTLE and INNOCENT Nazi gang in Germany.

So Rudolph Rocker is virulently attacked by Marcus Graham, who accuses Rocker of attacking anarchist "aged theories".

In his evident personal venom against Rocker, Marcus Graham overlooked the fact that Rocker's article in *The Freie Arbeiter Stimme* of New York, precisely indicated the "aged theory" to which he alluded.

In the beginning of the second paragraph of the article "THE ORDER OF THE HOUR" he refers to "the habit of considering every historical event as the outcome of fixed economic laws which ultimately lead to a higher stage of social life." Since when has that been an anarchist theory—"aged" or otherwise?

From William Goodwin down to Krupotkin and Errico Malatesta we do not remember one of our leading exponents who has asked us to accept such a proposition as a part of anarchist thought.

We believe it to be simply and purely a Marxist fallacy, which the history of the past fifty years has completely discredited.

So the reader will be able to recognise the malice underlying the personal attack upon Rudolph Rocker.

Rocker denies that the present war is only an economic issue. He claims that it is also a power problem. Even Marcus Graham admits that "Imperialism plays one of the most important parts in the causes of war."

Of course, Graham is only exercising an elementary right in saying that, but for Rocker to say something similar is, apparently, a heinous offence.

Marcus Graham refers to the "Weimar Republic" and to the advent of both Nazism and Fascism into European politics.

Rudolph Rocker opposed all of them, and, although he is a native of Germany, was refused admission to that country by the Weimar Republic for a time. Had he remained in Germany, his fate would have been that of many others, viz., decapitation, and his ashes after his cremation sent to his friends in a box.

Even an anarchist may be excused for objecting to that sort of thing, without in any way recanting any principle he ever believed in;

and all Marcus Graham's talk about Capitalism and Economic causes cannot screen from observation the Nazi infamy.

Not is there anything in anarchism to condone the inhuman abominations of which the Nazis and Fascists have been guilty in their efforts to build up great and powerful German and Italian Empires.

Rudolph Rocker has specially good reasons for deploring the shocking degradation, shame and ruin which the foul Nazi gang have brought in and upon Germany.

To him, who naturally cherishes in his mind all the higher types of legacies from German intellect and science of past times, it was bound to arouse in him keen and painful feelings that Germany has been brought down so low.

But a professed advocate of liberty makes no allowance for this. Not the least reference is made by Graham to it, and no latitude is allowed. It may be merely a matter for shallow poetical sentiment to Marcus Graham but to Rudolph Rocker it is a most appalling reality.

Rocker may be too generous in his attitude to the countries in which so-called democratic governments exist—and we are not compelled to endorse his or anybody else's opinion on that—but it must be borne in mind that Rocker for many years has found a refuge in them, and has there been able to express his sincere convictions freely, and perform valuable service in the cause of humanity and liberty.

We are told that Rudolph Rocker proceeds to attack (i.e. criticize) the workers. But why should not the workers be criticized? Are they any more sacrosanct than anybody else? We ourselves, as workers, have never claimed or desired to be exempt from criticism.

Is it not the truth to say that after the vast amount of effort and sacrifice made by very large numbers of men and women in Europe, that long before now the European workers should have understood the need of the times, and striven as a great solid International body, not only for the prevention of war but for the overthrow of Capitalism, Landlordism, and Imperialism? Who, or what, could have stood against them?

Is it not the fact that the power of the dominant and exploiting classes is provided from and by the workers?

We notice, too, the spiteful unfairness shown towards Rocker in the use made of the quotation stating that "The struggle against totalitarian slavery . . . is the first duty of our time." Which is converted into the implication that the "victory of the Democratic powers (*by itself*) will make possible the development of Freedom and Justice."

So it might, but that is not the meaning attached to the passage by Rudolph Rocker, or a reasonable reader. Indeed in all countries the struggle against Totalitarian slavery must be actively carried on "as the first condition for a new social development in the spirit of "Freedom and Social Justice." This is quite plain.

Does Marcus Graham really wish the totalitarian powers to succeed in the present conflict?

If he does, then let him honestly say so, and if he does, then Rudolph Rocker has an equal right, and as an anarchist, to wish the opposite.

He is guilty of the impertinence of lecturing Rudolph Rocker on moral honesty—which is as superfluous as it is insulting. Let him act on his own advice and, in addition, follow Rudolph Rocker's excellent example, viz., expound his views without making mean personal attacks on a man who has given a long lifetime to the service of the cause of Liberty and Humanity. Rocker's views remain unchanged but matured.

Rudolph Rocker came into the movement as a young lad, and soon left the ranks of the believers in authoritarian ideas.

After being exiled from Germany he gave sterling service for many years as the Editor of the Jewish anarchist journal, "The Workers' Friend", in London, besides having written many books such as "Anarcho-Syndicalism" and "Nationalism and Culture", to mention only two which come to mind, besides his activity as a lecturer and propagandist on behalf of anarchism, of which he has a full right to be proud. He has never joined the ranks of the mud-slingers in their dirty task.

His work in the U.S.A. is well known and his only detractor there is Marcus Graham.

Rocker has treated the attack with contempt, but the Comrades of the Workers' Friend Group wish to make an earnest protest against it.

On behalf of the Comrades of the Workers' Friend Group.

E. MICHAELS,

*Hon. Secretary.*

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## The Order of The Hour

By RUDOLF ROCKER

THAT THE PRESENT WAR, which spreads itself over all continents and is engulfing mankind like a bloody flood, cannot be measured by the standards of military conflicts of the past, is beginning to be realised even by those who believe that historical facts can be denied through aged theories.

The habit of considering every historical event as the outcome of fixed economic laws which ultimately lead to a higher stage of social life, is a terribly blind belief and has contributed in no small measure to the development of the present situation. Even though one is the bitterest opponent of the present economic system, to asser: that the present war is being waged solely in the interest of capitalist groups is such a twisting of the truth that worse could not be invented. Even if it is accepted that certain capitalist circles are profiting from the

great slaughter of the people, it nevertheless cannot be denied that the present catastrophe is transforming itself into a bloody menace to capitalism itself, and is against the interests of its servants and representatives. A social earthquake on such a vast scale must become a threat to every social system; that is why this fearful catastrophe is not simply a problem of certain classes, but of the whole of society itself.

It is a poor consolation to assert that the workers could have prevented the war if they had been more alert to their "class interests". That they had the power to do so, no one wishes to deny; but that they nevertheless did not prevent it, and that the great tragedy of our time has come just the same, is also a fact. To-day we know already that the broad masses of the French Labour Movement have aided in weakening the opposition to Hitler's hordes. Had the German workers done the same, it might have been a gain; but they did not do so, and the internal collapse of France therefore led to the bloody yoke of the German occupation upon the French Labour Movement.

The same story repeats itself in every European country. Just because the workers have too closely understood their so-called "class interests" and have underestimated the menace which threatens everybody, they, together with the whole of society, became the victims of the bloodiest tyranny in history.

The present war is not only an economic issue. It is first of all a power problem between two different forces of social evolution. One of these leads back to the epoch of absolutism, to the common enslavement of mankind, whereas the second slowly raises the people to a higher social and cultural level, and carries with it the historical legacy left to us by the revolutions of the past.

The abolition of feudal absolutism and of the economic reign of feudalism through the democratic and liberal revolutions, was necessary in order to provide the pre-conditions for the development of the modern Labour Movement and Socialism. Without the political rights and liberties which have been achieved the social movement of our epoch could not even have been thought of. Through them social aims have been developed. The rights which we now enjoy to-day in the democratic countries have not been received by the nations as gifts from their governments; they are the results of hard and bloody struggles and were often paid for with great sacrifices. Whoever fails to take into account these rights and is in agreement with Lenin's phrase that "freedom is but a middle-class prejudice" is altogether lost for a movement which strives towards social liberation.

One doesn't serve social liberation by squandering, without a struggle, rights already gained, but only when one is always ready to broaden these rights and create for them a wider field of effectiveness. It is not less rights and smaller liberties that we demand, but more rights and greater liberties. Whoever thinks differently is ripe for dictatorship and for the totalitarian state, and is consciously or unconsciously assisting the development of social reaction.

If it is true that democracy and liberalism have prepared the way for the modern Labour Movement and the social aims of our time, then it cannot be denied that the abolition of all democratic and liberal achievements must automatically lead to the abolition of the Labour Movement and of all libertarian aims. That this is not a vain assertion can be seen from the present bloody reality. The totalitarian regime has made a hell for liberty; and if this was not understood at the beginning, it was a great error which is now being paid for in blood.

The terrible tyranny in all countries which have been poisoned by the totalitarian cliques in the occupied countries; the cowardly and conscienceless murdering of so-called living hostages; the daily executions of anti-fascist workers and peasants in Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Serbia, Hungary, &c., create the existence of the totalitarian state. The ancient laws against the Jews; the frightful condition of millions of people in Europe who have been placed outside the law; the fear of the concentration camp; the barbaric suppression of all cultural achievements will bring about the collapse of civilisation in general, if Hitler should unfortunately be victorious.

To assert that to us it is all the same who is victor in this terrible conflict, means to aid the cowardly murderers, and to prepare the way for the "blessing" of Hitler's "New Order". The struggle against totalitarian slavery and its bestial achievements is the first duty of our time, the first condition for a new social development in the spirit of freedom and social justice. But the fact that we are making the struggle against dictatorship and the human-debauchery of the totalitarian state the order of the present hour does not mean that we believe even for a moment that the citizenship-society is the best in the world. It only means that we recognise the possibility of a higher development under better and more human conditions.

When the world is liberated from the militarisation of social life, from all forms of the totalitarian anti-state—only then will new possibilities be opened up for constructive creating and building. Freedom does not recognise a pre-determined ultimate aim; it is but the means which can open for us the doors to a new future. Since the creative forces of society were not able to build up a dam against the bloody flood of the war, let them at least learn from the newest terrible history in what manner it can, once and for all time, prevent similar catastrophes.

Not the slave-state of a so-called "Aryan" race will be the aim of humanity, but a federation of free nations, such as has been foreseen by Saint-Simon, Proudhon and Bakunin. That is the only basis on which a new life can be developed, and which will make our existence worthy and with a purpose.

*(Freie Arbeiter Stimme, 28 November, 1941).*

*A few Books and Pamphlets by*

**RUDOLPH ROCKER.**



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